



AGENDA ITEM COVERSHEET

PREPARED BY: Gloria Abbotts, Sr Planner

DEPARTMENT: Planning &
Development

MEETING: Town Council – February 14th, 2023

SUBJECT: **Text Amendment** to amend Chapter 40, Art. III. – Zoning District Regulations, Art. V. – Off-street Parking and loading requirements; Parking, Art, VI – Landscaping and Development Specification Standards, Art. IX. – Development Standards for Particular Uses, and Art. XVII. – Definitions to create standards for Event Venues.
Applicant: Michael Urti

BACKGROUND:

The applicant, Michael Urti, is proposing a text amendment to allow for event venues as a use in the Central Business District. Currently the Zoning Ordinance does not address event venues as a permitted use and there are no similar uses or use standards in the existing ordinance that would apply.

Proposal:

Staff worked with the applicant to come up with language to define the use and the associated standards that would apply. The text amendment consists of defining the event venues and defining the existing meeting facilities use. The existing meeting facilities use has been associated with uses such as the masonic lodge and senior center. Event Venues will be defined as commercial establishments with the primary purpose of providing space for meetings, gatherings, reunions, weddings, conventions, private parties, and other similar gatherings.

Wilmington, New Hanover County, and Wrightsville Beach all approve event venues and event centers through a conditional zoning approval process. The conditional zoning process allows for additional public input and the opportunity for specific conditions to be placed on the use. If adopted, Event Venues would be permitted only through Conditional Zoning. The applicant requested that event venues be permitted in the CBD, staff also suggests the Highway Business District. Event Venues would have the same parking requirements as eating and drinking establishments. The text amendment clarifies the waiver of parking requirements in the CBD if there are enough public parking spaces, not just public parking lots, to allow for street parking to be included in the calculation. Event venues must comply with all ABC standards, abide by the

noise ordinance, and provide landscaping. The landscaping ordinance currently requires only the installation of a six-foot fence if a commercial use is adjacent to residential uses or districts. The proposed landscaping requirement states that uses in the CBD abutting residential districts shall provide a Type B, 10 foot, landscape buffer along the abutting side and rear yards. The purpose of additional landscaping is to protect the residential areas and mitigate concerns.

Land Use Plan

The text amendment is in general conformity with the 2020 Land Use Plan by promoting a healthy year-round economy, providing a family-friendly community, and promoting redevelopment. One of the goals of the Land Use Plan was to continue to support the central business district as a destination downtown with activities for families, residents, and visitors. Expanding opportunities for public activities, including events, should be pursued.

ACTION REQUESTED:

Consider recommending approval or denial of the text amendment.

Staff recommends approval of the text amendment as proposed.

Planning and Zoning recommended approval of the text amendment as proposed.

MOTION:

Approval – to amend Chapter 40, Art. III. – Zoning District Regulations, Art. V. – Off-street Parking and loading requirements; Parking, Art. VI – Landscaping and Development Specification Standards, Art. IX. – Development Standards for Particular Uses, and Art. XVIII. Definitions. to create standards for Event Venues.

Denial – the amendment to Chapter 40, Art. III. – Zoning District Regulations, Art. V. – Off-street Parking and loading requirements; Parking, Art. VI – Landscaping and Development Specification Standards, Art. IX. – Development Standards for Particular Uses, and Art. XVIII. Definitions. to create standards for Event Venues.